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ABSTRACT

This paper reports the results of a survey that examined the success or failure of Empire State College's first 29 graduates in obtaining admission to graduate school. Of the 13 applicants, 7 were accepted, 5 were waiting to hear, and 1 was rejected. Difficulties encountered by the applicants are discussed, as are the intentions of those not planning to attend graduate school. (Author)

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ABSTRACT OF RESEARCH & REVIEW
No. 5

STUDY OF ESC GRADUATES

by

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and
Katharine Ogden

Reports results of a survey examining the success/failure of Empire State College's first twenty-nine graduates in obtaining admission to graduate school. Of thirteen applicants, seven were accepted, five were waiting to hear, and one was rejected.

Difficulties encountered by the applicants is discussed, as are the intentions of those not planning to attend graduate school.

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EDITOR'S NOTE: The last two issues of Research & Review have contained reprints from other published sources. In this issue, we are pleased to return to an "inside" report from the Office of Research and Evaluation, prepared by Ernest Palola and Katharine Ogden.

STUDY OF ESC GRADUATES

Institutional research programs in American universities and colleges have traditionally included the monitoring of graduates to determine the variety and scope of positions obtained, certificates and licenses received, graduate studies pursued, and the like. At Empire State College, the success or failure of recent graduates in obtaining acceptance into graduate schools is of particular and immediate interest, and is the focus of a recent "mini study" which asked ESC graduates if they had applied to a graduate school, if they had been accepted, what schools they had applied to, and what difficulties they had encountered in the process. In addition, it asked what they were doing or planning to do if not going to graduate school.

Twenty-nine recent graduates formed the target group who received brief questionnaires; 27 responded. Tables 1 and 2 give the responses to the two principal questions asked; since they are self-explanatory, the tables are presented without comment.

TABLE 1

Responses to the question:
"Have you applied to graduate school? If so, where?"

Yes	No	Total	Schools to which Graduates have Applied
13	14	27	Adelphi University
			Antioch College
			City University School of Graduate Studies
			Goddard College
			Hofstra University (2 applied)
			Hunter College/CUNY
			Long Island University
			Queens College
			Rensselaer Polytechnical Institute
			St. John's University
			State University of New York, Albany (4 applied)
			State University of New York, Brockport

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TABLE 2

Responses to the question:
"Have you been accepted at graduate school? If so, where?"

Accepted	Rejected	Waiting to Hear	Total	Schools at which Graduates have been Accepted
7*	1**	5***	13	Goddard Hunter College/CUNY Long Island University State University of New York, Albany (3 accepted) State University of New York, Brockport

* Of these seven, one is a non-matriculated student on a trial basis, and one has already withdrawn.

** Only R.P.I. had rejected an application to date.

*** Applicants who had not received a reply when this questionnaire was completed.

Difficulties Encountered In Applying To Graduate School

In listing difficulties encountered in applying to graduate schools, a few general problems were mentioned.

Five of the graduates indicated that the most common difficulty encountered involved the mechanics of having official transcripts completed and sent to the proper places. This is not altogether unexpected in view of the fact that for ESC's first graduation, the evaluation of final contracts, documentation of advanced standing, submission of candidates names to the State Board of Trustees, etc., all fell on the same calendar point; the generation of transcripts was therefore performed under less than ideal conditions.

A second problem mentioned by two of the graduates was that of being "out of phase" with graduate school calendars. Those who graduated in the summer or early fall of 1972 found that they were too late to apply for the fall semester at many graduate schools. One, having graduated from ESC on the very day of registration at the graduate school he wished to enter, solved the problem by entering as a non-matriculated student on a trial basis. These difficulties could be a function of last-minute planning on the part of ESC graduates and/or counseling regarding the lead time needed for admission to graduate schools.

A third problem noted by three of the graduates was the incompatibility of the educational program at ESC with the more traditional methods of teaching and testing as reflected in courses of study and admissions requirements at other schools. One graduate, unable to tolerate a lock-step curriculum, withdrew after completing the first part of her business program. Another was told by the graduate school to which she applied that GRE scores would have to be counted more heavily than usual because ESC was relatively unknown. She felt that such a survey test had little to do with the educational program which she had pursued at ESC.

The problem of ESC's unfamiliarity also occurred at the initial stages of application for one other graduate who was told by the admissions officer that he had never heard of ESC. However, after ESC's existence had been confirmed, there seemed to be no further problems.

Intentions Of Those Who Had Not Applied To Graduate School

Of the 14 graduates who had not applied to any graduate school, two expressed no intention to pursue graduate study. Twelve indicated plans to apply in the near future. At least eight of these twelve could be considered as definite applicants for graduate school. Seven of the twelve expressed the desire that Empire State College would institute graduate programs so that they could continue to study as they have been at ESC. Two of these seven are continuing to work with mentors at the Rochester Learning Center.

Working - Waiting

Many of the students who attend Empire State College simultaneously work either full or part time and/or have families. This is possible because of the flexibility of time and place afforded by the College's emphasis on individualized programs. When asked in the questionnaire what they were doing while waiting to hear from graduate schools or instead of going on to graduate school, the majority of the graduates replied that they are currently employed. A few of those attending graduate school are still holding down jobs. Of those employed, the majority are working as counselors, teachers, nurses, health technicians, and coordinators of social service programs and organizations.

Conclusions

It is important for all educational institutions to survey regularly their graduates since the results provide a reading on the acceptability of an institution's products in the larger academic community as well as the outside world, and suggests possible modifications, redirections, or extensions of institutional programs and structures. From the study done, it is apparent that many ESC graduates are considered favorably by different graduate programs. It is also significant that even among those graduates who have not yet applied to graduate school, there is a high level of motivation for present jobs and future career planning. Enthusiasm for the kind of alternative education offered by ESC is substantiated by the fact that there are several graduates who have expressed the desire that ESC would institute graduate programs.